

PRESS RELEASE

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NINTH "DARLINGTON 10" DEFENDANT SENTENCED

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Odilon Fernandez-Martinez, age 23, a citizen of Mexico, was sentenced today by Chief U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 21 months in prison for bank fraud. Fernandez-Martinez pleaded guilty on September 17, 2007.

In sentencing Fernandez-Martinez, Chief Judge Crabb noted he had previously been convicted in 2004 and 2005, in New Jersey and Indiana, of identical criminal conduct--cashing counterfeit business checks. She also noted that he has pending federal charges in the Middle District of Georgia for the same conduct.

Odilon Fernandez-Martinez and nine other individuals engaged in a scheme to fraudulently obtain money from financial institutions, specifically, First Banking Center, Citizens National Bank, and Amcore Bank, all located in Darlington, Wis. The defendants obtained counterfeited and fraudulent paychecks purporting to be drawn on the account of "Mexican Cheese Producers, Inc." of Monroe, Wis., with each of these bogus paychecks drawn in the amount of approximately \$1,000 and dated

approximately April 10, 2007. The defendants possessed, cashed, and attempted to cash these fraudulent paychecks at First Banking Center, Citizens National Bank, and Amcore Bank in Darlington.

Because of the speedy and effective response from law enforcement officers, all ten defendants were arrested in the vicinity of the banks after passing the checks on April 11, 2007. They had passed checks and already obtained \$20,398.25; the quick response of law enforcement led to the recovery of this entire amount, and all of this money has been returned to the banks. In addition, numerous other checks were recovered from the defendants which they intended to pass. Had these additional checks been cashed, the defendants would have obtained an additional \$18,256.85.

Eight other individuals have previously been sentenced:

Name and DOB	Crime of Conviction	Sentence Imposed
Luis Cordoba-Gomez DOB: 2/27/75	Bank Fraud	8 months in prison
Pablo Baltazar-Morale, DOB: 1/12/84	Bank Fraud	12 months, plus one day in prison
Osiel Garay Paez, DOB: 10/17/80	Bank Fraud	12 months, plus one day in prison
Lucino Mendoza-Flores, DOB: 12/27/83	Bank Fraud	8 months in prison
Eliu Villicana-Mancilla, DOB: 4/3/85	Bank Fraud	8 months in prison
Angel Zavala Ramirez, DOB: 3/5/82	Bank Fraud	12 months, plus one day in prison
Daniel Avilla, DOB: 12/3/83	Bank Fraud	12 months, plus one day in prison

Saul Duarte, DOB: 12/12/75	Bank Fraud	8 months
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The charges against Fernandez-Martinez were the result of an investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Darlington Police Department, the Lafayette County Sheriff's Department, and the Lafayette County District Attorney's Office. Prosecution of these cases have been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney John W. Vaudreuil.

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